

What factor you think will have the greatest impact in a child's educational performance?

- A. The method of instruction of the teacher.**
- B. Good friends the student has in school.**
- C. The level of content knowledge/competency of the teacher.**
- D. The level of domestic support (guardians) the student receives.**
- E. The teaching philosophy of the teacher/school.**

“D” is the Correct Answer

- Research over the last 30 years shows, that it is not a focus in the school that yields the greatest academic performance, but rather it is a focus in the home and on the parents that is “the greatest difference to student achievement” (Harris et al., 2008, p. 12).

**Sometimes we need to
improve our communication skills**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_OnLi
A8gbmo&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_OnLiA8gbmo&feature=related)

Communication with Parents

- It usually does not take a teacher long to see the positive effects of involved parents.
- Since tapping into parents is key to educating students, why is this topic given so little attention?



Establishing Partnerships with Parents Through Effective Commo

Susan Graham-Clay (2005). Communicating with Parents: Strategies for Teachers. *School Community Journal*, 16(1), 117-129. Retrieved December 10, 2009 online from ERIC database.

Harris, A. & Goodall, J. (2008). Do parents know they matter? Engaging all parents in learning. *Educational Research*, 50: 3, 277 — 289.

Epstein (1995) states that there are six main pillars to building parental involvement. This is just one pillar, but it is one that is largely neglected by educators (Graham-Clay, 2005).

Schussler (2003) considers this a *vital* (italics added) pillar to developing learning communities within a school.



Pic 2. Retrieved December 29, 2009, from www.codinghorror.com/blog/archives/000917.html

Discussion Road Map

Communicating with Parents

Avenues of
of
Communication

```
graph TD; A["Avenues of of Communication"] --- B["Things that help."]; A --- C["One way communication."]; A --- D["Two way communication"]; A --- E["Communication barriers."];
```

Things
that
help.

One
way
communication.

Two
way
communication

Communication
barriers.

Things that help

- Welcome signs (multicultural awareness).
- Smile, acknowledge people, be nice even if your not (important for front desk personnel).
- Cleanliness of school grounds.
- Hallway environment (sounds, dress).
- How you dress reflects the way you feel about yourself...the same goes for you school/classroom.

One way commo

***Teacher is informing
parents of:***

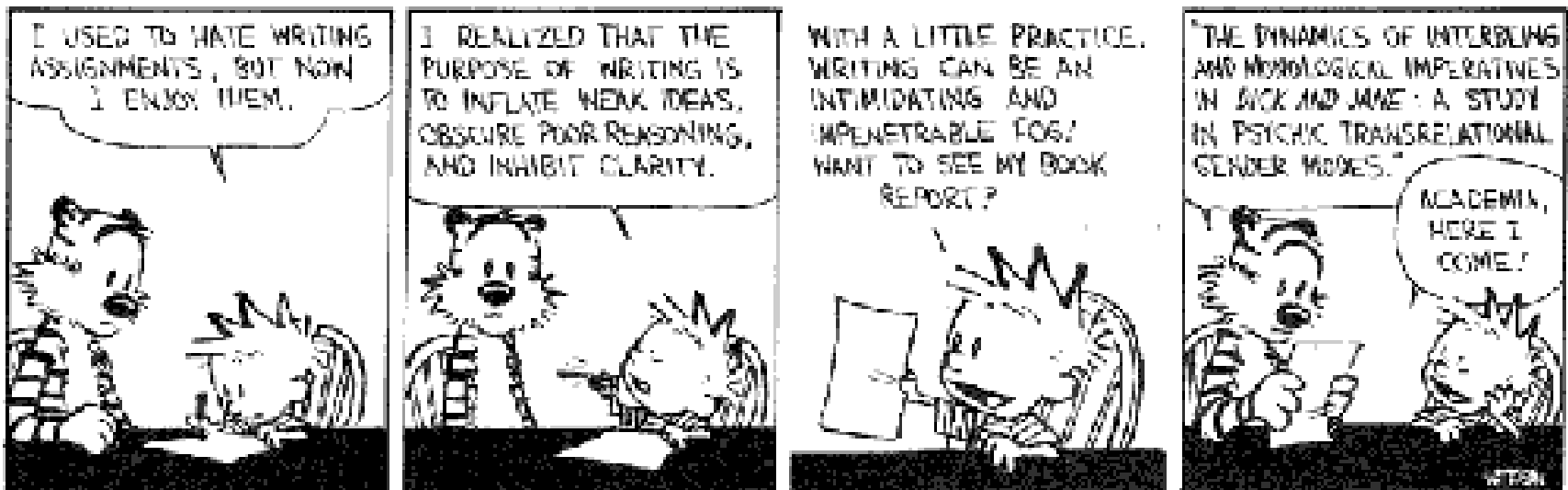
- Events
- Activities
- Student progress
- Class structure



One way commo (cont'd)

The most effective and efficient way is probably going to be through writing (Williams & Cartledge, 1997).

- Newsletters, school-to-home notebooks, syllabus etc.
 - **Careful consideration should go into formatting, content, accuracy, organization, and readability.**



One way commo (cont'd)

Some other tools to consider...

- **Report Cards** - this should not be the initial contact (especially if student is doing poorly).
- **Emails, phone messages...**
- **Literacy bags**
- **Blogs, websites, wikis, podcasts, videos....**

Two way commo

- This involves dialogue.
- A phone call home ~ 5 calls a day (be brief).
- Good news post cards.



Two way commo (cont'd)

- PTC - these are opportunities to create a successful parent-teacher alliance (Minke & Anderson, 2003).
 - SFBT - your limited on time (good technique for SC due to limited time).
 - Place the child at the center of the discussion (the whole child).

PTC cont'd

- **S-O-L-E-R** technique (listening skills).
 - **S**quare posture
 - **O**pen position
 - **L**ean toward the other
 - **E**ye contact
 - **R**elaxed position

Conversation is a dying art - practice!

Person A talk, Person B
SOLER w/ reflective listening skills.

You may have to teach faculty such things as:

*Reflective listening,
Minimal encouragers,
I statements,
Reflective questions.*

Use Glassners Self-Evaluation questions.

- Is what your doing working?
- Is there a better way to meet your needs?
- How is that working for you?

PTC cont'd

- Lindle (1989) reports in a survey that what parents want most is **to be treated with respect** and **as equals** when dealing with educators.
- A second important aspects is for the teacher “**convey a value of authority and wisdom of the parents**” (Graham-Clay, 2005.p. 121, and Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2004).
- What are some things that you have done?

Barriers to overcome

- Societal level (SES, education level).
 - Remember treat them as equals.
- Previous pattern of having school be a place of negative reports (Brandt, 1998).
 - Build that relationship of trust.
- Parents feel “unsupported, and misunderstood with the demands placed on them” (Graham-Clay, 2005, p. 123, and Taffel, 2001). - Valid feelings.
- Cultural barriers. – color conscious vs colorblind.
- Not understanding the education system – referral guide.
- Time constraints - Coordinate schedules & availability.
- Lack of Technology - Use paper.

Follow Up

- AAR
- Training without follow up has little effect.
- What have you done to better communicate with parent?
- How is that working for you?

References

- Brandt, R. (1998). Listen first. *Educational Leadership*, 55(8), 25-50.
- Corey, G. (2009). *Theory and practice of counseling and psychotherapy* (8 Eds.), Belmont: CA.
- Epstein, J. (1995). School/family/community partnerships: Caring for the children we share. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 72(5)701-712.
- Graham-Clay, S. (2005). Communicating with Parents: Strategies for Teachers. *School Community Journal*, 16(1), 117-129. Retrieved from ERIC database.
- Harris, A. & Goodall, J. (2008). Do parents know they matter? Engaging all parents in learning, *Educational Research*, 50: 3, 277 — 289.
- Justice, L. K. (2003). Retrieved December 30, 2009 online from, http://www.personal.kent.edu/~lkjusti1/Choice_Theory/Reality%20Therapy.htm
- Lawrence-Lightfoot, S. (2004). Building bridges from school to home. *Instructor*, 114(1), 24-28.
- Lindle, J. C. (1989). What do parent want from principals and teachers? *Educational Leadership*, 47(2), 12-14.
- Minke, K. M., & Anderson, K. J. (2003). Restructuring routine parent-teacher conferences: The family-school conference model. *The Elementary School Journal*, 104(1), 49-69.
- Price, B. J. & Marsh, G. E., II. (1985). Practical suggestions for planning and conducting parent teacher conferences. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 17(4), 274-278.
- Schussler, D. L. (2003). Schools as learning communities: Unpacking the concept. *Journal of School Leadership*, 13,498-528.
- Taffel, R. (2001). *Getting through to difficult kids and parents*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Williams, V. I., & Cartledge, G. (1997). Passing notes-to parents. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 30(1), 30-34.
- Pic. 1. Retrieved December 29, 2009 online from www.maine.gov/.../communication.htm
- Pic. 2. Retrieved December 29, 2009, from www.codinghorror.com/blog/archives/000917.html
- Pic. 3. Retrieved December 28, 2009 online from, walksigns.com/index1.html
- Pic. 4. Waterson. © Universal Press Syndicate. Retrieved December 29, 2009 online from <http://aruneo.wordpress.com/2009/02/25/academia-here-i-come/>
- Pic. 5. Retrieved December 29, 2009 online from, www.exchange3d.com/.../prod_2072.html